

Many of his paintings give the viewer a glimpse into a much simpler and more peaceful past that our grandparents or great-grandparents may have lived. His scenes of unaffected and idealistic farm and family life grace many walls, and his paintings and prints have become famous all over the world.

Duncan lives with his wife and six children in a charming farmhouse in this small Heber Valley settlement.

Several of the people and animals depicted in his work are his own neighbors and their pets and farm animals, and many of his most famous images and places are scenes he can see from his own front yard. But his work is known all over the world.

According to Duncan, his work sells the best in the Midwest, in such states as Minnesota and Wisconsin. It is also beloved in Canada and Europe. Recently, a fellow artist spotted his work in Russia.

Meaningful subjects

"I like to paint those things that have meaning to me: Family, friends, animals, the farm. Everyone that has grown up on or around a farm has that side to them; the serenity that comes from soaking up the peacefulness and continuity of farm life."

Robert Duncan acknowledges that much of what he paints is so hard for people to be able to live nowadays. He says there is a sadness in him that all of those things he loves — the farm, the garden, family time — are becoming so hard for people to experience.

"I like to paint those things so that people can have a little bit of that on their wall, and look at it and feel the peace that a walk on the farm gives them."

He hopes more people will "teach the children to plant a seed, grow a garden, experience the law of the harvest. There is nothing like the taste of a sun-warmed tomato fresh out of the garden." In face, one of his most enchanting prints titled "Ripe



At his fingertips: Robert Duncan sits with his tools at his studio in Midway.

Tomatoes" is of a small child in overalls, with soft curly locks, sitting in the middle of a tomato patch, eating a tomato while an older sister looks on.

Personal favorites

One of Duncan's own personal favorites is the work titled "Mother and Son." The painting shows a quiet moment where a mother is holding her small son as both look out the window. The woman is Duncan's wife, and he felt the painting depicted how most parents feel as they hold their young children and "look out and wish and pray and hope for wonderful things for that child."

And that is why Duncan's work touches so many people; most everyone can relate to the concepts, ideals and scenes he paints.

"Kids, farms and animals relate to most everyone. Family is a universal thing."

But Duncan actually gained much

of his initial recognition with his breathtaking Western scenes. He said one of his most exciting career moments came when he met and became friends with John Clymer, a famous illustrator whose work can be found on more than 100 Saturday Evening Post covers. Clymer had come west to pursue his love for Western art and that is when the two artists met.

"John assisted in showing me what it took to become a professional artist." About this time, Duncan was inducted into the Cowboy Artists of America, and won two silver medals in their annual exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum, which was a dream come true for him.

New vistas

Later, Duncan chose to retire from the Cowboy Artists of America so that he could pursue other genres of art. "I felt a real need to paint those

things that matter the most to me," Duncan says in his 1998 calendar.

Duncan can't remember a time when he ever wanted to be anything but an artist. He spent summers as a boy on his grandparents' ranch in Wyoming, where his grandmother gave him his first set of oil paints. He also recalls going around and drawing animals on the ranch.

As with most professional artists, though, he had his frustrations.

"It's an up and down business. The early ten years were really a struggle," he said. "I'm never quite sure if I want to encourage kids to go into this field or not," he said wryly. Several of the Duncan's six children have shown an interest and a talent in art, and Duncan said he's not certain he wants them to follow in his footsteps; he knows first-hand the struggles that come with being a professional



Painter's Paradise

Utah artist captures essence of Rockwell in series of paintings from the countryside

Home on the range: Robert Duncan poses with a recent pioneer scene painting in his studio in Midway.

MARC LESTER/The Daily Herald

By JANELL R. BRYAN

Herald Correspondent

M IDWAY — Robert Duncan might best be described as the agrarian Norman Rockwell of our time

